



SYLLABUS for History and Theory of Design
DIG3025 Section 01
Spring 2010
Tuesday/Thursday 5:00–6:15pm
Fine Arts Building (FAB) 249

History is an angel being blown backwards into the future. History is a pile of debris, and the angel wants to go back and fix things, to repair things that have been broken. But there is a storm blowing from Paradise, and this storm keeps blowing the angel backwards into the future. And this storm is called Progress.

—Laurie Anderson (after Walter Benjamin)

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Professor: Chad Eby
Email: ceby@fsu.edu
(please put “History&Theory” in the subject line
or use the contact form on the class web site)
Office Location: Kellogg Research Building, Room 11d (basement)
Office Hours: by appointment
Class site: <http://courses.chadeby.org>

COURSE MATERIALS:

Required Text:
Meggs' History of Graphic Design (Hardcover)
by Philip Meggs & Alston W. Purvis
Hardcover: 592 pages
Publisher: Wiley; 4 edition (December 7, 2005)
ISBN-10: 0471699020 / ISBN-13: 978-0471699026
Weight: 4.70 pounds (!)

Suggested Text:
Graphic Design History: A Critical Guide (Paperback)
by Johanna Drucker & Emily McVarish
Paperback: 416 pages
Publisher: Prentice Hall; 1 edition (February 8, 2008)
ISBN-10: 0132410753 / ISBN-13: 978-0132410755
Weight: 2.4 pounds

Additional handouts and electronic texts will be provided as needed

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Long version: This course visits selected technological developments, art movements, design styles, cultural shifts, and artifacts of visual communication along a timeline from prehistory to the present day. We will also explore critical theory as it relates to media. The first half of the course deals with the large span of time from the advent of early writing systems through the eve of modernity, while the second half of the course focuses primarily on selected events, people, and ideas of the 20th Century in the United States and Europe.

Short version: This is mostly a class about the history of people making things to show to other people. We'll pay special attention to typography, and we'll also try to find out what might have been going on in specific times and places that made things turn out the way they did.

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COURSE GOALS:

The aim of the course is first to increase your awareness of the historical design canon—those objects, styles, movements and people that historians and critics have deemed (rightly or wrongly) to be of major significance. The second goal is for you to gain a better understanding of how those objects, styles, movements, and people are intertwined with the cultural, political, technological and material conditions that were present at their time of creation, and how our present set of conditions continue to shape and change our perceptions of them today. Third, this awareness and understanding is intended to inform and enrich your own practice of art/design as context, inspiration and as an aid to communicating verbally and visually with other artists and designers.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

You will gain knowledge about the emergence of visual and object design practices over time. At the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- Classify an object/artifact as belonging to a particular style or period based on its design characteristics
- Describe some of the relationships between and among tools, makers, cultures and objects and give both historical and contemporary examples
- Synthesize elements of a particular style to create new artifacts that exhibit key design characteristics of that specific style

COURSE POLICIES:

Teamwork: Much of the day-to-day work in this class will be done in permanent teams. This may differ from “group” work you have done in the past where almost the only work actually done in the group was to divide up responsibilities for a project. The teams in this class will work together to solve problems and reach consensus positions on issues relating to design—generally during class time so that you will not have to try to coordinate your already busy schedules. It is my hope that this will provide a richer experience than me simply standing at the podium and delivering information (although I will still do a fair amount of that, and will be prepared to do more if need be).

Contacting me: I very much want each of you to succeed, both in this class, and also at FSU in general. If I can be of any help to you in realizing your academic goals, please contact me and make an appointment for us to meet. It is best to contact me by email, or through the form provided at courses.chadeby.org. Be aware that we may have quite different schedules, so I may not respond immediately to email. I will post assignments, news, schedule changes, etc. at the class website, so please check in often or consider subscribing to the RSS feed at <http://courses.chadeby.org/feed/>

Attendance: Attendance tends to take care of itself in this class because there are quizzes (iRATs and tRATs) over assigned readings at the start of many class periods. If you are absent for any reason (or just late enough to miss that day’s quiz) you will receive a zero, and missed iRATs may not be made up.

Late work: I will accept late work. Projects lose one letter grade per day (*not class period*) that they are late. This means an excellent project, which would get an “A” if turned in on time, could only receive a “C” if turned in 2 days late.

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GRADING/EVALUATION:

Grades are calculated using a total points system based on 500 points.

Graded Items	Points Possible
Individual Projects	100
Mid-term Exam	100
Team Presentation/tRats	100
Final Exam	100
iRATs	100
TOTALS	500

At my discretion, I may also award up to an additional 20 total points (usually at 5 points per essay) during the semester for brief essays on events, exhibitions, etc. as optional extra credit. I will announce these extra credit opportunities in class and on the website as they come up. The grading scale will then be:

Points	Letter	Description
465-500	A	Excellent
450-464	A-	Very Good
435-449	B+	
415-434	B	Good
400-414	B-	
385-399	C+	
365-384	C	Average
350-364	C-	
335-349	D+	
315-334	D	Below Average
300-314	D-	
0-300	F	Failing

ASSIGNMENTS/RESPONSIBILITIES:

Your individual assignments in this class include individual multiple choice readiness assessment tests (iRATs) at the beginning of each class, one visual communication project, one mid-term exam and one comprehensive final exam. Team responsibilities include team assessment tests (tRATs), in-class team exercises, and a team presentation.

The final exam is scheduled for Thursday April 29, 2009 at 5:30-7:30 pm in FAB 249.
I will not offer the exam at any other time. Really.

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FLORIDA STATE HONOR POLICY:

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to ". . . be honest and truthful and . . . [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://www.fsu.edu/~dof/honorpolicy.htm>.)

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact:

Student Disability Resource Center
97 Woodward Avenue, South
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
sdrc@admin.fsu.edu
<http://www.fsu.edu/~staffair/dean/StudentDisability/>

SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY:

This syllabus is a good-faith effort to present the contents and mechanics of this course, but adjustments may be required. Any adjustment that affects grading will be announced in advance to the class at large. The most current printed revision of this document may be requested from me and is also available electronically from <http://courses.chadeby.org/>